

The Old Heber City

September 9-September 15, 1982



The old tabernacle stands erect in downtown Heber City. It was constructed in 1897, using sandstone bricks.

A person, traveling Heber City's Main Street, sees many interesting old structures. But the most impressive one can be seen towering above all its surroundings.

Set back behind a large spread of lawn stands the Wasatch Tabernacle.

In 1861, the Mormon church had grown rapidly and the officials of the Church felt a ward in the city should be organized. Joseph S. Murdock was called to move his family up to Heber and become the first Bishop. He served until 1867 when President Brigham Young called him to go to southern Utah and raise cotton there. John Witt acted as bishop until Abram Hatch, a Lehi resident, was called and moved to the valley.

Abram Hatch was an able church leader for the Heber ward but he also had sound business and financial ability. He established a community store and strengthened the church organization. More adequate roads were built and a canal that benefited the people was constructed under his direction.

In 1872 and 1873 Bishop Hatch directed the building of a social hall on main street. It was used for town meetings, church services, dances and theatrical performances.

In 1877 the area had grown so much that the church officials decided to organize a stake. On July 14 and 15 in that year Elders John Taylor and Franklin D. Richards of the Council of the Twelve came to Heber to organize the new stake.

Bishop Hatch was called as the new Stake President.

The new stake extended into Summit County and covered all of Wasatch County.

By 1887, the stake had grown considerably and President Hatch saw the need for a new house or tabernacle. He built the new structure that year entirely with donated labor and materials. Cost was more \$30,000.

The shingles on the tower of the building were cut from sheet metal. The red sandstone was quarried by hand from the mountains east of Heber in Lake Creek. The floor was bleached with

home made soap. Home made carpets were laid down the aisles. Coal oil lamps hung from the ceiling. Pot bellied stoves were warming in each corner.

The building was ready for dedication on May 5, 1889. Elder Francis M. Lyman of the Council of the Twelve came for the dedication.

The Wasatch Wave covered the event as follows: "The Stake House is finished and cleaned in beautiful style ready for dedication tomorrow. Conference visitors are expected to clean their feet before entering the building and leave their knives and pencils and tobacco at home."

A bell was hung in the tower and rung each Sunday morning at 9:30 to remind the saints of Sunday school, and again at 1:30 in the afternoon to call them to sacrament meeting. It was also rung as a fire alarm or any other important circumstance that warranted a gathering of the people. For funerals the bell was very slowly tolled as the cortege approached the stake house.

At the rear of the building